

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART PRESENTS

ART IN CINEMA

SIXTH SERIES

1950

A survey of the most important new directions in experimental film-making, together with some epic avant-garde films of the past.

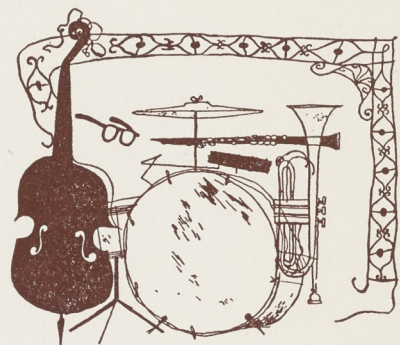


FRIDAY, MAY 5

1. OCTOBER (TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD) By **SERGEI EISENSTEIN**. Here are developed the great Russian director's theories of film form in a most concentrated and volcanic masterpiece. **2. COLOR AND LIGHT; REFLECTIONS No. 8; JERSEY FALL, SEQUENCE No. 1,** By **James Davis**. This famous artist in plastics who produced the film, **Light Reflections** (winner of an award at the Belgium International Film Festival) will present his three new short films in person, and deliver a unique demonstration of their method of production. **3. SODA JERK**, an early one-reeler with **Buster Keaton**.

FRIDAY, MAY 12

1. FIVE INSTRUMENTS WITH OPTICAL SOLO. The film by **Harry Smith**, will serve as the sixth instrument in a be-bop jam session to consist of an expert group in person, on the piano, cornet, valve-trombone, bass and drums. This is the first presentation anywhere, of a performance in which the optical images will be tried, not as visualization of the music, but as a basis for its departure. **2. DESTINY (DER MUDE TOD)** By **Fritz Lang**. The legend of Death and the Maiden in one of the most ambitious of early German epics. **3. BE GONE DULL CARE** By **Norman McLaren**. The recent work of this eminent Canadian film artist. **4. EYES HAVE IT**, an early one-reeler with **Ben Turpin**.



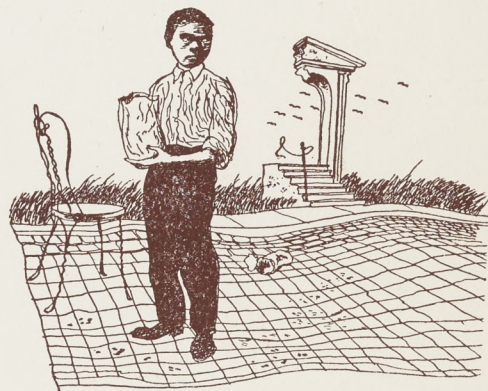
FRIDAY, MAY 19

1. WEST WIND (VINDEN FRAN VASTER) By **Arne Sucksdorff**. The beautifully realized poetry of this young Swedish director's camera finds a sympathetic theme in a legend of Lapland. (At the time of this printing we are negotiating for an additional film by Sucksdorff). **2. RAGAMUFFIN.** Produced by Films Polski; written and directed by **W. Hos**. A remarkable Polish essay of a child's poignant dream and reality. **3. THE PRIVATE LIFE OF A CAT.** **Alexander Hammid's** famous documentary, the subject matter of which has restricted its general showing. **4. TOCCATA MANHATTA** and **ROUND TRIP IN MODERN ART** By **Robert Bruce Rogers**. Two short experiments in optical music. **5. DRIFTERS,** By **John Grierson**. The film that created the foundation for British documentary. **6. LOOPS** By **Norman McLaren**. A portion of his experimental reel submitted last year to the Edinburgh Film Festival. **7. DO NOT DISTURB,** By **L. Moholy-Nagy**. A film based on the theme of jealousy. **8. VAMPIRE,** a remarkable study of this creature by France's renowned **Jean Painleve**.



FRIDAY, MAY 26

1. THE QUIET ONE. Written by **James Agee** and directed by **Sidney Meyers**. First showing locally of this important and much-discussed new achievement in American film history. **2. FANTASY FOR GIRL AND ORCHESTRA** By **Dick Ham**, with **Shirley Winters** and the orchestra of **Phil Moore**. Experiment in fitting images to preconceived sound track. **3. DIMINISHED IRIS,** an experimental dance film by **Josephine Booth**. **4. UNTITLED FILM** by **Charles Maddux**. **5. COLOR FRAGMENTS** By **Elwood Decker**. Part of a work-in-progress. **6. A SHORT PROGRAM OF REJECTED TELEVISION SPOTS.** These rejected commercial spots (by **John Whitney**, **Denver Sutton**, **Frank Stauffacher**, **Dorsey Alexander**, **Charles Maddux**, **Keith Monroe**, and others) display a wonderful dynamic visual vitality that is, unfortunately (and apparently) years ahead of its time. **7. JAIL BAIT,** an early one-reeler with **Buster Keaton**.



NOTE: The films have been drawn from a wide variety of sources, from the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, from various other distributors, and from the individual artists themselves. We ask your indulgence when programs must be altered due to circumstances beyond our control—shipping failures, poor quality of prints, etc. The series is organized on the same basis as previous series: Non-profit, non-commercial, with admission by series subscription only. Due to previous seating difficulties, seats at this sixth series will be reserved.

Art in Cinema is collaborating with the University Extension, University of California, in presenting an additional series of films at Wheeler Auditorium, May 2, May 23, June 8 and June 20, to consist of some of most outstanding films already shown at the San Francisco Showings in past series. For details, see the University Extension bulletin.

(TEAR HERE)

TO: ART IN CINEMA SOCIETY
San Francisco Museum of Art
Civic Center, San Francisco

ORDER BLANK
Sixth Series

☐ Museum Member
☐ Public

(CHECK ONE)

Please send me _____ series tickets at \$3.60 each (series) including tax (\$2.40 for Museum Members) for the series of 4 nights of ART IN CINEMA film series, May 5 through May 26, at 8:00 P.M. Friday evenings.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED _____

(Make check or money order payable to the San Francisco Museum of Art, and enclose stamped, self-addressed envelope for return of tickets.)

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA-----SERIES SIX

Friday, May 5, 1950

(Due to unforeseen alterations in bookings, the short comedies originally announced, have been rearranged as follows: Tonight, Ben Turpin in A TOTAL LOSS; May 12, Buster Keaton in THREE MEN ON A LIMB; May 19, Buster Keaton in JAIL BAIT; and May 26, Charlie Chaplin in IN THE PARK.)

A TOTAL LOSS.....Ben Turpin, etc.

COLOR AND LIGHT)

REFLECTIONS NO.8).....James Davis

JERSEY FALL, SEQUENCE#1)

(10 minute intermission)

OCTOBER(TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD)....Eisenstein and Alexandrov

Program notes

A TOTAL LOSS, with Ben Turpin. c1922.(From Film Classics Exchange) It is difficult to trace screen credits for production and dates on many of these early one and two reel comedies, as the original title cards have long since disappeared in the labyrinths of the film distribution world, and many of them never gave credits in the first place.

Chaplin, Keaton, Ben Turpin, Harold Lloyd, and Harry Langdon each had distinct techniques -each based on visual factors entirely - that contributed to what James Agee has called "Comedy's greatest Era". Slapstick was so pure, direct and unsophisticated that in the eyes of critics and film historians it became one of the most sophisticated contributions to film art.(Running time 14 minutes)

COLOR AND LIGHT, REFLECTION NO.8, JERSEY FALL SEQUENCE NO.1. By James Davis. (Films from A.F.Films, Inc.) Art in Cinema is extremely fortunate in having Mr. Davis with us at this time for his unusually beautiful demonstration of his work in mobile colored plastics and light. Although his film LIGHT REFLECTIONS, (shown here two series ago) won an award at the Brussels Film Festival last year, Mr. Davis comes to film through his work in plastics. The films were originally made as documents and presentations of his work, but they have become an important discovery in the development of the abstract film itself.

OCTOBER(TEN DAYS THAT SHOOK THE WORLD) Produced by Sovkino; directed by Sergei Eisenstein and Grigori Alexandrov; photography by Edward Tisse. Russian, 1927. (Museum of Modern Art Film Library). This colossal experiment in film construction was termed by Eisenstein "the intellectualized cinema". In contrast to his preceding masterpiece, POTEMKIN, which was a straightforward presentation of historical events, OCTOBER is an experiment in the subjective dramatization of ideas. Thorold Dickinson writes: -- Eisenstein made, in three crowded months, a massive film in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution of 1917. Had he been allowed to give more time to it, Eisenstein would have digested his subject more thoroughly and in consequence delivered a more shapely film with a climax worthy of the masterly first half. As it is, OCTOBER builds up imaginatively and satirically epitomising the history of the revolution until it approaches its peak, the ten days that shook the world. In dealing with these days in detail it becomes more of a newsreel construction and less of a work of art. It bogs down in certain details for which the spectator, already half pulverized by a concentration of visual blows unparalleled in film history, has no stomach left.

Nevertheless, the art of the cinema has never been the same since. If OCTOBER is an imperfect masterpiece, it is because Eisenstein attempted too much -not in subject matter, but in subjecting the medium of film itself to the expression of events, ideas, feelings and obscure nuances of feelings that had never been attempted before. In his book "Film Form", one can see to what depths and passion Eisenstein explored the possibilities of the silent cinema through his own section-by-section analysis of what he tried to do in OCTOBER.

While POTEMKIN found favor among Soviet audiences, OCTOBER proved to be inexplicable to the simpler among them, and infuriating to the Bolshevik leadership, who adopted the term "formalism" as a derogatory description of Eisenstein's use of symbolism and his careful execution of deliberately arranged visual patterns and rhythms. Scarcely anywhere was the film allowed to be shown in its full length, and after some years it was totally forbidden both for the matter and manner of its interpretation of history. Few complete prints exist outside of Russia.

The music for this presentation of OCTOBER has been arranged and cued by Paul Velguth.

Next program, May 12: Five piece bop group with Harry Smith's optical solos; Fritz Lang's DESTINY(Der Muße Tod); Norman McLaren's BE GONE DULL CARE, etc.

ART IN CINEMA--SERIES SIX

Friday, May 12, 1950

No other art is devoted, as film is devoted, to fulfilling modern man's need for expression. But no modern technical device is experimented with so little. The artist in films can try new methods only within tight limits. This is a tragic situation, but I hope he continues to be obstinate in his desire to try, continues to show his convictions which the commercial film, if they wish to survive, does not dare dispense with. (Alf Sjöberg in BIOGRAFIEN)

BEGONE DULL CARE.....Norman McLaren
LOVE AND BULLETS.....Keystone

A STRANGE DREAM)
MESSAGE FROM THE SUN.....).....Harry Smith
CIRCULAR TENSIONS.....)
INTERWOVEN.....)

(10 minute intermission)

DESTINY(Der Mude Tod).....Fritz Lang

Program Notes

LOVE AND BULLETS. A Mack Sennett comedy for Keystone; circa 1914. (Film Classics Exchange). Sennett was the first of America's comedy directors to develop a distinct film style: slapstick. With its burlesque satire, its action and fantasy achieved through the use of camera trickery, his method was the fruition of some fifteen years of experiment with the humorous incident and the chase situation. Sennett had a feeling for pace and unity in scene progression—even though the events were in themselves mad and were improvised as the action developed—which distinguished his films from all other comedies of the day. Unfortunately his famous Kops, in this particular one-reeler, appear too close to the end, just when the action seems to start on its maddest pace.

Films without a camera: The British artist, Len Lye, was the first to try painting patterns directly on the film emulsion with transparent dyes, thereby eliminating the camera entirely, and creating the most absolute and "pure" of all pure film theories. In this technique, the only mechanism needed is the projector, the constant speed of which brings the patterns to life and endows them with a definite rhythm. Lye's shorts were, for the most part, financed by the British G.P.O. Film Unit, and they became immensely popular in England. His student, Norman McLaren, working for the National Film Board of Canada, has carried this difficult technique even further. BEGONE DULL CARE is his latest work.

A STRANGE DREAM; MESSAGE FROM THE SUN; CIRCULAR TENSIONS; INTERWOVEN. Four films by Harry Smith. In contrast to Lye and McLaren, who start their patterns after the sound track, Smith's carefully measured rhythmic designs are composed visually first and the music added or evoked after. His approach to this difficult technique is probably more complex than either Lye's or McLaren's in that each frame itself is considered as a separate composition, altering gradually from frame to frame, whereas the patterns of the other two extend along the film strip in a manner much resembling the sound track. Smith is now at work on the first full-color, three-dimensional, non-objective film, under the sponsorship of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation. The music for these four films tonight is played, under the direction of Atlee Chapman (Trombone and Bass trumpet) by Henry Noyd (trumpet), Kermit Scott (Tenor saxophone), Robert Warren (bass), Warren Thompson (drums), and Stanley Willis (piano).

DESTINY(Der Mude Tod) Directed by Fritz Lang for UFA; photography by Fritz Arno Wagner. With Bernhard Goetzke and Lil Dagover. (Museum of Modern Art Film Library) This is one of the most famous of German silent films that followed in the wake of THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI. It was Lang's first large film, soon to be followed by SIEGFRIED, and in it are detected the monumental and Wagnerian-like compositions that were to become characteristic of Lang's style, and which culminated, some years later, in METROPOLIS. The actual story of DESTINY is negligible, but the inventiveness and richness of the pictorial visions were remarkable for their day and still possess impressive power. Siegfried Kracauer writes: The Venetian episode resuscitates genuine Renaissance spirit through such scenes as the carnival procession and the splendid cockfight radiating bright and cruel Southern passion in the mode of Stendhal. The Chinese episode abounds in miraculous feats. It is well known that its magic steed, its Liliputian army and its (jerkily) flying carpet inspired Fairbanks to make his THIEF OF BAGDAD. DESTINY was a precursor; much of the imagery in it was startlingly new, and Hollywood was quick to adopt and to copy these conjuring tricks and compositions that Lang had developed, particularly after the film became a hit internationally. (Musical accompaniment for this showing arranged by Paul Velguth)

May 19th: A DIVIDED WORLD(Sucksdorff) PRIVATE LIFE OF A CAT(Hamid) etc.

THE SAN FRANCISCO MUSEUM OF ART

ART IN CINEMA-SERIES SIX

Friday, May 19, 1950

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF A CAT.....Alexander Hammid
LOOPS.....Norman McLaren
LE VAMPIRE.....Jean Painleve
STARS AND STRIPES.....Norman McLaren
DO NOT DISTURB.....Moholy-Nagy
RAGAMUFFIN.....Hos, Films Polski

(Ten-minute intermission)

VALLEY OF DREAMS.....Arne Sucksdorff
A DIVIDED WORLD.....Arne Sucksdorff
DRIFTERS.....John Grierson

Notes

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF A CAT By Alexander Hammid. 1946. 20 min. (Courtesy Mr. Hammid) This film was made by the famous cinematographer and co-director, with Herbert Kline, of CRISIS, LIGHTS OUT IN EUROPE, and FORGOTTEN VILLAGE. It was banned for public showing by the New York Board of Censors, although it is rather difficult to understand why. The deftness and skill of this little film's construction belies the actual difficulty and patience required to build a cohesive story around these feline actors.

LOOPS and STARS AND STRIPES. By Norman McLaren for the National Film Board of Canada. 1947-48. 3 minutes each. (From The National Film Board) Two painted-on-film experiments; the first has a synthetic sound track. Since a sound track consists of the photograph of the sound graph itself - a pattern - it is possible to create artificially, sound on film by arbitrarily drawing, by hand, a pattern where the sound track should be. This pattern, moving past the photo-electric eye of the projector amplifier, creates a species of artificial sound.

LE VAMPIRE. By Jean Painleve. 1940. 10 minutes. (From the Franco-American Audio-Visual Distributing Center) For twenty years Jean Painleve has been triumphantly demonstrating that the scientific film can be the most engrossing of art forms. "With LA PIEUVRE and LE VAMPIRE he has combined legend and the more prosaic face of reality. In CREVETTES, his superb skill as an editor and cameraman is matched by Jaubert's evocative music. Like his fellow countryman, Cousteau, who in PAYSAGES DU SILENCE has depicted the dream landscapes to be found beneath the waters of the Mediterranean, Painleve brings an element of fantasy and imagination to everything he touches. And this is not the least of the contributions which the film can make to our understanding of science. Films can break down frontiers which often divide the man of science and the artist, frontiers as outmoded as the so-called faculties of the mind which are sometimes used to label them." (John Maddison, in Roger Manvell's "Experiment in the Film") The passionate and nervous commentary, written and spoken by Painleve himself, displays this eminent cinematographer and biologist's rich imagination applied to a subject that, in the hands of most scientific film-makers, is apt to become a deadly bore.

DO NOT DISTURB. Filmed by the Motion Picture Class of the Institute of Design, Chicago, under the direction of Moholy-Nagy. 1946. 20 minutes. (From the Illinois Institute of Technology). The complete scenario of this experimental film can be found in Moholy-Nagy's book, "Vision in Motion." It is based upon a photomontage entitled "Jealousy", made by Moholy in 1925.

RAGAMUFFIN. Written and directed by W. Hos for Films Polski. 1946-47. 12 minutes. (From Instructional Materials Center, University of Washington) The post-war Polish film is, to a much lesser degree, similar in growth to the Post-war Italian film in that their pre-war product was singularly undistinguished, while something like a film renaissance has taken place since the war. The Polish film is under the direction of a State controlled company, Films Polski, and it has been greatly handicapped by a lack of experienced technicians and equipment. This sensitive short, however, displays a thoroughness and an intelligence of film craft, with its rendition of a child's world, made truly poignant by the unforgettable performance of the little boy.

The work of Arne Sucksdorff: (Sucksdorff's WEST WIND, originally scheduled for tonight, has been omitted since VALLEY OF DREAMS and A DIVIDED WORLD cover the ground better.) Arne Sucksdorff is a young Swedish director who has rapidly blossomed into a distinguished and unique maker of documentary films. His approach is entirely individual - he is his own cameraman and, except for music, does not seek collaboration in any phase of production. Most documentary films are based upon a message or an argument; Sucksdorff's films are all based upon a mood, a personal and private reaction to his material and they do not go beyond that in their intent, although they do in result. This can be termed a true poetry in the film medium.

Although Sucksdorff's real and understood world is the world of Nature and wild life, his SYMPHONY OF THE CITY, when shown last year at Edinburgh, became immediately the talk of the Film Festival. Where most city documentaries - indeed most documentaries of any kind - seem tired and strung to hackneyed techniques and strident sound tracks with messages, warnings and sales-talks, Sucksdorff's film merely rested for a few moments here and there upon the visual and audible phases of Stockholm's life. There was not one word of commentary. It has already had considerable influence on the "imaginative" documentary; EDINBURGH, or WAVERLEY STEPS, shown recently at a local theatre on the same bill as THE TITAN testifies to this influence. SYMPHONY OF THE CITY and a number of his other shorts have been purchased by Fox Twentieth Century for distribution, and are not available for non-theatrical showings at this time.

VALLEY OF DREAMS and A DIVIDED WORLD (Courtesy Mr. Rudolph Carlson) are the only 16mm prints available in this country. The first has English titles but no commentary; the second has the Swedish titles and an unfortunate and completely unnecessary English commentation added in this country for our instruction and edification. One reason for our deciding to omit WEST WIND is the embarrassing and destructive commentary that almost completely obliterates the thing that Sucksdorff wanted to say with his camera.

The foundation of Documentary: DRIFTERS. By John Grierson. 1929. 30 minutes. (From Instructional Materials Center, University of Washington) This is Grierson's first film and it fathered the whole school of British documentary, that contribution which is Britain's most important to film history and development. "DRIFTERS stands out not merely as Grierson's personal film but as the first example of the British school of documentary. He made DRIFTERS on a shoestring. It humbly brought to the screen the labour of the North Sea herring catch from such an approach that the ordinary person was made to realize, probably for the first time, that a herring on his plate was no mere accepted thing but the result of other men's physical toil and possible courage. It brought alive not just the routine of the catch but the whole drama of emotional values that underlay the task, interpreting in its stride the unconscious beauty of physical labour in the face of work done for a livelihood. Moreover, there were brought to the conception all the poetic qualities of ships, sea and weather. In other words, Grierson took a simple theme (there for the taking), took actually existing material (there for the shooting), and built a dramatised film by interpreting the relationships of theme and material in the sphere of daily existence." (Roger Manvell in "Film")

Frank Stauffacher

Next Week: THE QUIET ONE, by Sidney Myers; REJECTED TELEVISION SPOTS; COLOR FRAGMENTS by Elwood Decker, Film by Charles Mattox, etc.

(Note: ROUND TRIP IN MODERN ART and TOCCATA MANHATTA by Robert Bruce Rogers has not arrived at this printing, and will be presented next week.)

ART IN CINEMA

Friday May 26, 1950

COLOR FRAGMENTS.....Elwood Decker
 IN THE PARK.....Charlie Chaplin
 DIMINISHED IRIS.....Josephine Booth

(Ten-minute Intermission)

THREE MEN ON A LIMB.....Buster Keaton
 THE QUIET ONE.....Sidney Meyers

Notes

The television spots, ranging in length from thirty seconds to two minutes, have been interspersed between the other titles in order to separate them, and give them the "spot" character for which they were designed. The E.B. Rice spot was made by Keith Monroe and Dorsey Alexander; the Philip Morris was made by Denver Sutton, the Cresta Blanca by Frank Stauffacher and Keith Monroe, and the Butternut Bread by John Wolfe, photographed by Photo and Sound Productions.

The two minute "musicgrams" are all by John Whitney, and are not intended to plug a particular product, although they could obviously be adapted to that purpose, and very admirably so. They are designed for a small screen - the regular television screen-size - and projection on a large movie screen, as here, tends to over-simplify the forms: they appear quite different on the small television screen. John Whitney will be remembered by steady Art in Cinema audiences as one of the famous Whitney brothers who have long pioneered in abstract films and synthetic sound experiments.

All of these experimental TV presentations have been rejected for commercial use, for one reason or another; but they have mainly been rejected because they were deemed too "arty", and not "hard-selling" enough.

* * * * *

COLOR FRAGMENTS by Elwood Decker. 1949-50. 10 minutes. Mr. Decker sends no program note with his film except to say that it is a portion of a larger film entitled LIGHT MODULATOR.

IN THE PARK. Charlie Chaplin. 10 minutes. This is one of the countless hundreds of one-reelers - so many hundreds that Chaplin himself does not know the number - that he made for both Keystone and Essanay. This one was made for Essanay; in 1916 he left Essanay and signed a contract with Mutual for \$670,000 a year. "With the Keystone and Essanay experience behind him, he now set for himself higher standards, not only to sustain his reputation but to improve it. From now on every film he turned out was to be the result of an ordeal of nervous tension, infinite and unrelenting effort, constant self-questioning. He worked tirelessly, critical of himself and of everything and everyone about him, shooting hundreds of thousands of feet of film to get two thousand that satisfied him." (From Lewis Jacob's "Rise of The American Film.")

DIMINISHED IRIS. By Josephine Booth; photography by William Heick; filmed in cooperation with the Dance Dept. of Mills College. 1949. 8 minutes. Josephine Booth is one of the few dancers who edits her own films, a process which she feels the dance is not yet properly appreciating (in regard to the production of dance films), inasmuch as it wields the final control over film choreography. Her desire in this film was to achieve, in part, the quality of an abstract painting, and in an attempt to fill the screen as one would a canvas, she employed the technical use of ascending and descending levels, outdoor sculpture, suspended geometric patterns, boom shots and finally, the editing process.

The dancer here takes on a stark emotional-physical progression, and her device of perpetually cutting into the movement with a series of static composition was intended to forward the action and impose a greater psychological dimension.

THREE MEN ON A LIMB. Buster Keaton. c1930. 15 minutes. (From Film Classic Exchange) The silent film period was Keaton's greatest and most classic era. He seems to have made only short comedies, after the advent of sound, and none of them were really as good as his earlier work, although this present one has moments of the typical and earlier Keaton.

THE QUIET ONE. Screen play by Helen Levitt, Janice Loeb and Sidney Meyers; Directed by Sidney Meyers; commentary by James Agee. Ever since the days of Nikoli Ekk's ROAD TO LIFE, feature films and documentaries have dealt with the problems of delinquent children. No picture of the last decade has probed more deeply into the mind of a delinquent child than THE QUIET ONE.

THE QUIET ONE is the outgrowth of a short subject which Janice Loeb and Helen Levitt shot in Harlem in 1947. It was never released, but Sidney Meyers, former chief film editor for the U.S. Office of War Information, became interested in the film, and eventually the short grew into a much more comprehensive project.

The film was completed on the extraordinarily low budget of \$28,000. It was photographed with a silent camera on 16 mm film and later "blown up" to standard 35 mm size for theatrical distribution. Since the director wanted to use non-professionals rather than actors, casting required utmost care. Many weeks were spent in observing children in Harlem before selecting 11 year Donald Thompson for the lead. Donald himself was not a delinquent boy, but he knew many children like those shown in the film, and he knew what it meant to them to be unwanted.

THE QUIET ONE is centered in the slums of Harlem and the Wiltwyck School for Boys at Esopus, New York. The background of Wiltwyck's boys is overshadowed by one predominant emotion: They have always felt unwanted. They are not stupid, but, as the narration puts it, "they are stupefied by shame - they've failed so often, they're afraid even to try any more."

The film's approach to Donald's difficulties is stated at the beginning: "We learned his story very slowly, by bits and pieces, but we'll try to tell it as it happened to Donald, secretly, in his loneliness - in a lost child's bewilderment." Nowhere has Sidney Meyers' direction succumbed to the temptation of taking shortcuts. Donald's problems are followed through in all their ramifications, and the spectator is never rushed to premature conclusions. Sound, music and narration are used sparingly, a restraint which lends additional weight to each spoken word - and to the long stretched of silence.

THE QUIET ONE is a film without individual villains. There is no pointing finger of blame. Those who have misshapen Donald's personality are products of their environment, "they are generations of those maimed in childhood, each making the next in its own image", creating "upon the darkness, like mirrors," locked face to face, an infinite corridor of despair." All those who tolerate the conditions shown in the picture share the blame. But THE QUIET ONE is not a fatalistic picture. In showing what has been done in one case, it proves that more can be done.

There is no happy ending to THE QUIET ONE: "The happiest thing we can say is that the worst of his loneliness, the loneliness that paralyzed and kills, is ended. We can help him now. Now that he has begun to make peace with the past, and begins to feel at home in the present, we can help him to equip himself against the future."

It is difficult to summarize the importance of this film. It has again demonstrated the vitality of the low budget picture, and the importance of subordinating purely technical perfection to the film as a whole. The producers knew what they wanted to say, and they were not afraid to say it. Robert Katz.

THE QUIET ONE. Screen play by Helen Levitt, Janice Loeb and Sidney Meyers; Directed by Sidney Meyers; commentary by James Agee. Ever since the days of Nikoli Ekk's ROAD TO LIFE, feature films and documentaries have dealt with the problems of delinquent children. No picture of the last decade has probed more deeply into the mind of a delinquent child than THE QUIET ONE.

THE QUIET ONE is the outgrowth of a short subject which Janice Loeb and Helen Levitt shot in Harlem in 1947. It was never released, but Sidney Meyers, former chief film editor for the U.S. Office of War Information, became interested in the film, and eventually the short grew into a much more comprehensive project.

The film was completed on the extraordinarily low budget of \$28,000. It was photographed with a silent camera on 16 mm film and later "blown up" to standard 35 mm size for theatrical distribution. Since the director wanted to use non-professionals rather than actors, casting required utmost care. Many weeks were spent in observing children in Harlem before selecting 11 year Donald Thompson for the lead. Donald himself was not a delinquent boy, but he knew many children like those shown in the film, and he knew what it meant to them to be unwanted.

THE QUIET ONE is centered in the slums of Harlem and the Wiltwyck School for Boys at Esopus, New York. The background of Wiltwyck's boys is overshadowed by one predominant emotion: They have always felt unwanted. They are not stupid, but, as the narration puts it, "they are stupefied by shame - they've failed so often, they're afraid even to try any more."

The film's approach to Donald's difficulties is stated at the beginning: "We learned his story very slowly, by bits and pieces, but we'll try to tell it as it happened to Donald, secretly, in his loneliness - in a lost child's bewilderment." Nowhere has Sidney Meyers' direction succumbed to the temptation of taking shortcuts. Donald's problems are followed through in all their ramifications, and the spectator is never rushed to premature conclusions. Sound, music and narration are used sparingly, a restraint which lends additional weight to each spoken word - and to the long stretches of silence.

THE QUIET ONE is a film without individual villains. There is no pointing finger of blame. Those who have misshapen Donald's personality are products of their environment, "they are generations of those maimed in childhood, each making the next in its own image", creating "upon the darkness, like mirrors," locked face to face, an infinite corridor of despair." All those who tolerate the conditions shown in the picture share the blame. But THE QUIET ONE is not a fatalistic picture. In showing what has been done in one case, it proves that more can be done.

There is no happy ending to THE QUIET ONE: "The happiest thing we can say is that the worst of his loneliness, the loneliness that paralyzed and kills, is ended. We can help him now. Now that he has begun to make peace with the past, and begins to feel at home in the present, we can help him to equip himself against the future."

It is difficult to summarize the importance of this film. It has again demonstrated the vitality of the low budget picture, and the importance of subordinating purely technical perfection to the film as a whole. The producers knew what they wanted to say, and they were not afraid to say it. Robert Katz.